

AMES' SERIES OF
STANDARD AND MINOR DRAMA.
NO. 105.

Through Snow and Sunshine

WITH CAST OF CHARACTERS, ENTRANCES, AND EXITS, RELATIVE POSITIONS
OF THE PERFORMERS ON THE STAGE, DESCRIPTION OF COS-
TUMES, AND THE WHOLE OF THE STAGE BUSINESS,
AS PERFORMED AT THE PRINCIPAL
AMERICAN AND ENGLISH
THEATRES.

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⌘ Catalogue continued on next page of cover. ⌘

THROUGH SNOW AND SUNSHINE.

AN ORIGINAL DRAMA

IN FIVE ACTS,

—BY—

T. M. Montgomery & T. D. Steed,

As produced under the personal supervision of the authors, at the Opera House, Cleveland, Tennessee, Tuesday Evening, February 18, 1879.

With a synopsis of incidents, original cast of characters, description of costume, entrances and exits, and the stage business.

—O—

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THROUGH SNOW AND SUNSHINE.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

As originally performed at the Opera House, Cleveland, Tennessee, Thursday Evening, February 18th., 1879.

Harry Fairfield.....	T. I. Gaut.
Wm. Brierly	T. M. Montgomery.
Josiah Nibs.....	W. C. Steed.
Tim Whipall.....	T. D. Steed.
Old Miller.....	L. V. Brown.
Squire Danvers.....	R. C. Newell.
Mary Brierly	Miss Lillie Smith.
Dollie (the dairy-maid)	Miss Mattie Hughes.
Widow Whipall.....	Miss Sallie Taylor.
Miss Sallie Hanscom	Miss Jennie O'Neil.

Farm hands, 1st. & 2d. officers.

Costumes—Modern.

Time of performance—two hours.

SYNOPSIS.

ACT 1st—SCENE 1st. Farmer Fairfield's home. The harvest. Celebration. The pleasure is marred by Brierly and Nibs. The fight and victory of the farmer. The dance. SCENE 2d—Snowing. The Plot. Dollie taking Tim home. The farm-house fired. The supposed murder of Tim.

ACT 2d—SCENE 1st. Circumstantial evidence against the farmer. Separation from the girl he loves. Brierly revenged. (Three years supposed to elapse between 2d & 3d Acts)

ACT 3d.—SCENE 1st. The home of Tim Whipall. Widow Whipall advertises for a husband. SCENE 2d.—Mary Brierly's sorrow for her lover. Brierly pleads for her hand. She consents. Brierly confronted by Nibs. They quarrel. A compromise is effected. SCENE 3d.—Widow Whipall gets an answer to her advertisement. Tim confronts his mother. SCENE 4th.—Fairfield's return. Is met by Tim and Dollie. He accompanies them.

ACT 4th.—SCENE 1st. Fairfield attempts to see Mary. Brierly and Nibs quarrel. The villainy of Brierly.

ACT 5th.—SCENE 1st. Brierly prepares. SCENE 2d.—The wedding day. Ceremony stopped. Meeting of Fairfield and Mary.

Through Snow and Sunshine.

ACT I.

SCENE FIRST.—Woodland, [3d. grooves] near the farm house of Harry Fairfield. At the rise of the curtain, cheers are heard off R., and enter Harry Fairfield, followed by Old Miller, farm hands, millers and maids. As they enter they cheer.

Harry. [L.] Friends and neighbors, this is the first time since my father's death that in my own name I bid you welcome to our harvest home. It is only one short year that I have been your master, but we have known each other long, and love each other well. As you found my father, so shall you find me—not only an employer, but a friend. I have invited the men in yonder mill to join you in your festivities, and as I see they are coming I will once more bid you welcome, and enjoin you to be merry and wise.

Farmers. (R.) Hear! Hear! Three cheers for Master Harry.

All. Hurrah! Hurrah! Hurrah!

Har. I am glad to see you my men, I think I have provided all that is necessary, but if there is anything lacking, speak and you shall not want it long.

Millers. (together) Thank'ee, thank'ee!

Old Miller. (R. c.) It be very kind of you farmer, to think of us poor chaps. It shows you have a good heart, and the man who treats his servants well don't lose by it, though there be some who won't see it. Now there's Master William, much as he likes pleasure himself, don't think us poor fellows want any, and if it hadn't been for Miss Mary saying as how we might leave work, I don't believe Master William would have let us, Oh, farmers, it be a pity that old Brierly give so much power to that nephew of his, he will regret it some day, see if he don't!

Har. You may misjudge Mr. William, he has not been brought up in the country as we have, his manners may belie his feelings. However do not let us speak of unpleasant subjects, but make yourselves merry.

Enter R. 3 E. other Millers supposed to be from Brierly's Mill.

Millers. (as they enter) Hurrah, for Master Harry!

Old Miller. Come on boys, and let's begin the fun. Hello, there comes Mr. William!

Enter William Brierly, and Josiah Nibs, L. 3 E.

Brierly. (L.—in a passion) What does this mean?

Millers, Maids, etc. get to back of stage.

Har. (c.) It is our harvest home, Mr. Brierly, I should be happy if you would join us.

Bri. Join you! Do you take me for a clod-hopping boor like yourself, that you ask me to join in the rude festivities of a set of ignorant workmen.

Har. (R.) Mr. Brierly, I took you for a gentleman, I am sorry for the mistake.

Bri. (advancing—in a passion) Rascal, dare you deny that I am?

Har. A gentleman! Certainly I do, though it needs no assertion of mine, since your very acts and words prove it.

Bri. (L. C.—in a hissing tone) You shall regret this.

Har. (smiling) I am not easily frightened.

Nib. Nib!

Nib. (L.) Yes sir.

Bri. Take down the names of every man and boy who left the mill to join these fellows here, and, mark me sir, when they present themselves at the mill again, pay them what is due and instantly discharge them.

Old Miller. We be not away without leave sir? Miss Mary Brierly told us we could go.

Bri. Did she? then you'll find my man, that I am master, not her. You never enter the mill again!

Har. Or rather say, tyrant! Shame on you, Mr. Brierly, this act of yours, stamps you a mean spirited tyrant, and a contemptible coward!

Bri. Coward!

(advancing with anger)

Har. Aye, coward. Your paltry spirit sought revenge for the rebuke I gave you, you feared to turn upon me, so turned upon them. I repeat, you are a coward, and a tyrant!

Bri. Villain! Apply that epithet to me again and I'll——

Har. Hold, Mr. Brierly! For the sake of one I love, I would not harm you, therefore goad me not too far.

Bri. Harm me! Presume to address me again, and in the presence of these ignorant rustics, I will chastise you.

Har. Hark you, Mr. Brierly, I can see your object is to quarrel with me, but be warned in time. Look upon this arm of mine! it has been made strong as iron by hard and honest toil. I offered you this hand in friendship—you spurned it, if you goad me to extend it in enmity, you will regret it.

Bri. If you think that the arm strengthened by toil, is a match for the one wielded by science, this to convince you of your mistake.

(strikes at Harry, who passes the blow and strikes Brierly down.)

Enter Tim, R. E.

All. Hurrah, for the young master!

Nib. I am witness to this assault on my respected master, and the law, sir, shall make you pay for it!

Tim. Shut up, quill driver! stand back, or I'll just lay my whip about those thin legs of yours!

Flourishes his whip—Nibs jumps out of the way—during the above Brierly gets up.

Bri. Farmer, that blow shall cost you dear! I hated you before, I loathe you now, and my vengeance shall never slumber till I have crushed you body and soul.

Har. Ha, ha! I care no more for your threats, than for the passing breeze. If you can injure these poor men, you cannot harm me.

Bri. I can, and I will! I will strike, not at your face, but your heart, and your reputation. You triumph now, Harry Fairfield, but the victory will soon be mine. I hate you, and I will be revenged!

Har. Viper! I know what your threat portends, you would ruin me in the estimation of the girl I love, and through your cousin Mary, strike at my heart. You have sought this quarrel, because I aspire to the hand you would win!

Bri. Aye, and I will blight your hopes, and ruin your happiness! Harry Fairfield, you have made me your foe, your bitter, lasting, implacable foe!

Har. Coward! Now I know you in all your infamy, I will have no mercy!

(catches him by the throat)

Enter Mary hurriedly, R.

Mary. Hold, hold! in mercy!

Har. (releasing his hold) At your command, Mary, I spare my direst foe, your foe and mine!

Mary. Cousin, what means this! Wherefore is this scene of joy, turned into one of bickering and sorrow.

Bri. He struck me, and I am not one to forget or forgive a blow. But this is no place for you, so come!

Mary. Where? *(grasps her arm)*

Bri. To the mill, to your home! I will explain all there. *(drawing back)*

Mary. If you refuse to explain it here, I will hear it from Harry, and then I shall get a truthful version I am sure, since Farmer Fairfield is too proud, and too truthful to stoop to a falsehood.

Bri. You forget Miss Brierly, that in your father's absence, I am your guardian, and that you must accompany me if I will it so.

Mary. Indeed sir, I have a will of my own, and shall use it! Were you not yourself in fault, you would not be so eager to drive me hence.

Tim. That be it, Miss, he be a mean paltry sneak. It be his own seekings and he's got just what he deserves. *(Brierly dashes at Tim)*

Tim. *(standing firm, whip in hand)* Keep off! or I'll put my whip around! I beant in the service at the mill, and you can't sack I, as you have these poor chaps, 'cos they come to drink a glass at harvest home!

During the above, Mary and Harry have been conversing.

Mary. Cousin, could you think to win my respect by what you have done? It but imbitters those feelings of aversion I always entertained toward you. Here my affections are centered, and here they will remain.

(places her hands in Harry's)

Har. Thanks, dearest, for that answer!

Bri. Mary, you know not whom you spurn! I have sworn that man should not call you wife, and I will keep my oath.

Mary. Leave us, your presence is a blight upon the happiness of all!

Bri. Aye, and I will blight your happiness and his! Farmer Fairfield, your triumph shall be short lived, you have a serpent in your path that will sting you to the death. *Beware, be warned, for my vengeance never slumbers.*

(he turns and is followed by Nibs, both exit)

Mary. Oh, Harry, Harry! beware of that man! I will reveal all to my father on his return, and he will not dare to harm me. But he is treacherous and cruel, and may strike you when you least expect it.

Har. I shall be prepared, come when it will, Marv. Our friend's mirth has been stifled, but now that he has gone, all will be well again. *(turning to rustics)* Come friends, let's be merry and of good cheer, and that no shadow may lie across the path of your joy, I engage to employ every man whom Mr. Brierly discharges.

Tim. Three cheers for Master Harry. Hollo, boys, hurrah!

Har. Now let's have a merry time. Get your partners boys and we will have a social dance. *(Dance—after which they all exit)*

SCENE SECOND.—Landscape. Snow falls during the scene.

Enter Brierly, and Nibs, l.

Nib. You requested me to meet you here, sir, and here I am!

Bri. I did, and it is well you obeyed. Mr Nibs, I have been carefully looking over your books, and I find ———

Nibs. *(interrupting)* What, sir?

Bri. That for a long time past you have been embezzling my uncle's money, and it becomes my duty to hand you over to the officers of the law. Josiah Nibs, let me tell you that transportation is the penalty of your crime.

Nibs. Oh, Mr. Brierly, for heaven's sake be merciful! do not betray me, spare me, and I will bless you, become your very slave!

Bri. You see how firmly I have you in my power, one word from me, and a prison cell becomes your home, then a trial, conviction, and finally a journey across the seas, a branded felon to meet a convict's doom.

Nibs. *(kneeling)* For the love of heaven, spare me!

Bri. *(aside)* Good, I can play upon his fears and use him for my purpose. *(aloud)* Spare you! why should I spare you? What return will you make for mercy?

Nibs. *(kneeling)* I will do your every bidding—become your most abject slave.

Bri. Swear it, then!

Nibs. I do, I do!

(*he rises*)

Bri. Enough! this moment I will put your promise to the test. You know I have a hated foe in Harry Fairfield. I hate him for his courage and independent spirit, but I hate him with a deadly hatred because he has won the love of my cousin Mary.

Nibs. Yes, yes!

Bri. Since you are in my power, I will speak plainly. I would wed my cousin, not only because I love her, but that I may possess the wealth my uncle has been years accumulating. This Harry Fairfield will tear her from my arms unless a blow is struck that will separate them forever.

Nibs. Then strike it, he has often treated me with contempt, and I too hate him.

Bri. So much the better, for then you won't have any scruples in ruining him.

Nibs. (*surprised*) I! Mr. Brierly?

Bri. You—and your reward, my forbearance, my refusal to brand you a felon, and transport you beyond the seas for the term of your natural life.

Nibs. But though I hate him, he has never injured me, as he has you. Why not strike the blow yourself?

Bri. And place my own liberty in jeopardy. No, Josiah Nibs, you have already forfeited yours, and if you would have me spare you, yours must be the hand to relieve me of a foe, yours the hand to avenge my wrongs, and place my cousin's affections in my keeping. Refuse, and you spend your Christmas in a prison.

Nibs. I must consent!

Bri. Of course you must, and now listen to the plan that is to destroy Farmer Fairfield, and save yourself. I know that he has insured his farm and stock for a heavy sum, and were it destroyed by fire, suspicion might be excited as to foul play. Could suspicion become certainty that the farmer had willfully set fire to the place, not only would he be plunged into poverty, but his character would be blasted and he would be punished as an incendiary. Do you follow me?

Nibs. (*horrificed*) Yes, yes, yes!

Bri. That is well. Now, mark me. Farmer Fairfield's property must be consumed by flames to-night, and means must be contrived to prove that the fire was willfully caused by the owner of the place. Unless this is done, to-morrow sees you charged with embezzlement.

Nibs. No, no, Mr. Brierly, I cannot do it!

Bri. Then I will place you in the hands of the law!

Nibs. What if I divulge what you wish me to do?

Bri. Who would believe you, it would make you appear even a greater scoundrel than you are, and embitter your judges against you. But have you decided to refuse the only means by which you can save yourself?

Nibs. No, no! It is a terrible deed, but it shall be done.

Bri. The plot is easy of accomplishment, and the reward your liberty. Tired with their revels, and half stupified with ale, those on the farm will sleep soundly to-night. Entrance to the kitchen is easy, the farmer's coat slightly burned, with his tinder box and matches in its pocket, left close to where the fire commences is all that is required. Who but a fool would endure transportation for life, when half an hour cleverly employed saves you and makes the man who can destroy you, your friend forever.

Nibs. (*in agony*) Oh, it is a fearful crime, but it must be done!

Bri. It must! but some one comes this way, we must not be seen together, come, we will mature our plans as we go. But it must be done, and this very night!

(*takes Nibs by the arm and exit L.*)

Enter Tim and Dolly r. Tim drunk.

Dolly. Now do stand up Tim, what a stupid you are! I'd never touch the ale if it made such a fool of me as it does you.

Tim. Only been drinking Master's health, Dolly, for he's a jolly good fellow you know, and it's Christmas time and——

(*stumbles*)

Dol. Stand up or I'll shake you, that I will! (*shakes him*)

Tim. Don't be cross, Dolly, it's all owing to Christmas, you know, and—well—I'm—blest Dolly, if you ain't a twin. Why which is you—and which is yourself? (*stretches out his hand for the imaginary Dolly and falls*)

Dol. Dear, dear, I've half a mind to leave you here and let you sleep till you get sober!

Tim. These feathers hain't been shook up, the bed's very hard—I think they have stuffed the chickens in along of the feathers, and I'm blest if the feathers aint all flying about—I won't put up with a hard bed when we are married.

Dol. Oh, you stupid drunken fellow, I don't think I shall have anything more to say to you, that I don't! You ought to be ashamed of yourself, to drink till you see two Dollys, and fancy the snow is a feather-bed. Get up directly or I'll leave you where you are! Mother would be angry if she knew I had left the house.

Tim. He's a jolly good fellow, and your a jolly good fellow, and we're all jolly—jolly—jol——jol——

Dol. (*trying to raise him*) Now Tim, will you go straight home, if I leave you? I shall get into trouble, if mother finds I am not in the house.

Tim. I'm all right—Dolly—you shan't get into a row, give me a kiss!

Dol. No, Tim, I must be going. *exit R.*

Tim. I say, Dolly, why where is she? just now there was two of her here, and now there ain't one. Hello, how these feathers are flying about! I'll mend the tick to-morrow, how the bed goes 'round! (*falls, and sleeps*)

Enter Brierly, L.

Bri. Surely the fool's courage will not fail him! no, fear will nerve his hand and steel his heart. He is in my power, and dare not rob me of my vengeance. Ah, Harry Fairfield! you little know the man you struck, if you think his revenge will slumber, you little dream of the terrible vengeance that is mine. (*light off L.*) Ah! the flames are kindled that shall destroy him. Yes, yes, the house is on fire! I triumph! Some one comes, I must not be seen—this tree will hide me. (*gets behind tree*)

Enter Nibs, in haste, with gun L.

Nibs. Good heavens, what have I done, what have I done! (*looking back at fire*) Oh, wretch that I am, can I ever survive this night! Why do I hesitate to kill myself with this gun I took from the house to defend my own worthless life.

Bri. (*coming forward*) Fool! away, away I say! discovery will be ruin.

Nibs. What harm has Harry Fairfield ever done me, that I should fire his house and hide my own crime by planting evidence against an innocent man?

Bri. Idiot! have you not saved yourself from transportation by the deed?

Nibs. And have I not ruined the prospects, blighted the character, blasted the very life of the noble hearted farmer, to save myself, and to minister to your revenge? William Brierly, mine was the hand to kindle the flames, but yours was the head to plot. Not I alone am guilty, and if through this night's work I fall, we fall together.

Bri. Fool! why should you fall? I hated Harry Fairfield, the power I held over you, I have exchanged for my triumph over him. You have gained in safety, I in revenge, and where is the evidence to prove that you or I are guilty!

Tim. (*springing up*) Here, here!

Bri. Oh!

(*Nibs starts to run, Tim springs upon him*)

Tim. Accursed villain, I have heard enough to show that you fire is the work of your hands, and I will denounce, and drag you to justice, or die in the attempt!

Bri. Fool, you have learned too much! (*takes gun from Nibs*) Your babbling tongue must be silenced forever.

Tim. Oh, coward!

Bri. (*strikes Tim with gun who falls*) Meddling fool, die! (*examines him*) he is silenced and cannot harm us!

Nibs. What! what have you done?

Bri. Saved you from the gallows, fool. Why do you stand quaking there? Whose gun is that?

Nibs. Harry Fairfield's.

Bri. So much the better, it will serve our purpose now, let it lay beside this corpse. (*lays gun down*) Another fearful evidence against the man I hate. (*takes Nibs by the arm*) Rouse yourself fool, put on a look of courage if you cannot feel it, come let's away. (*bath exit*)

CURTAIN.

ACT II.

SCENE FIRST—Woodland.—Harry Fairfield seen standing when curtain rises with head bowed.

Har. Oh! this is a bitter blow. Yesterday, all so joyous, to-day ruin and desolation.

Enter Brierly—he lays his hand on Harry's shoulder.

Bri. This is a bad change, farmer, very bad.

Har. (*recoiling*) You, you here? Mr. Brierly have you come to feast your eyes on my ruin, and triumph in my misery?

Bri. Not so, farmer, yesterday you were a proud and prosperous man, to-day you are ruined and despairing. Yesterday I hated, but to-day I pity you. I would not have held out my hand to save you from sinking, but now I offer you two, to pull you up, give me your hand farmer, and if I can do anything to assist you, command me.

Har. Mr. Brierly, perhaps we have both been hasty and uncharitable to each other, but let be-gones be by-gones. I thank you for your offer but must decline it.

Bri. This is pride, Harry, I tell you I would be your friend, can I assist you?

Har. No, I thank you, it is true the old farm is gone and the plentiful harvest has perished, but I thank heaven I am insured and though I am pained at the thoughts of the many it will injure this bitter winter, yet I am not a ruined man.

Bri. Well I am glad to hear it, yet I fear——

Har. Fear what?

Bri. That the fire occurring so soon after your insurance will lead to a deal of inquiry and trouble.

Har. Wherefore?

Bri. Because insurance companies are always on the lookout for some means to escape payment, and the fire occurring so soon, if they could make it appear the work of an incendiary, depend upon it, they would only be too glad to do so in order to save their gold—but of course you have nothing to fear in that direction. Your character is too high for suspicion.

Har. I trust it has always been so.

Bri. I am sorry for you farmer, and if you alter your decision, and will accept aid from me, I shall be glad to help you. Yesterday we were foes—let our quarrel be forgotten, and give me your hand.

Har. Willingly—(*gives hand*)—for though I do not fear a foe, I would rather possess a friend. There is one favor I will ask of you, since now I cannot employ the men discharged at your mill, you will let them return to their work.

Bri. They shall once more believe in my sympathy and willingness to aid you. (*exit Harry &c.*) The fool believes in my sincerity, so much the better, should a suspicion of the truth flash through his mind, he would

instantly spurn it. Easy forgiving fool, to believe that my enmity slumbers. I hate him, but I must play the hypocrite to further my own ends. Hello! Mary comes this way to condole with her rustic lover, but that love shall be blighted, the idol of her soul held up to infamy and disgrace.

(*exit L.*)

Enter Harry L. C. Mary R. C.

Mary. Oh, Harry, Harry!

Har. Mary, the old farm is gone!

Mary. How did it happen, Harry?

Har. That I know not, I was aroused by the smell of smoke and hurried down to find the place in flames, and all the hands that slept on the farm were asleep and I had only time to awake them, and then it was too late to do anything but watch the destruction.

Mary. Could it have been set on fire?

Har. I do not think it could—I have no enemy. All was safe when I retired, and I was the last one up on the premises.

Mary. It is a sad, cruel blow to fall at such a season of peace and good will.

Har. It was but yesterday I resolved, upon your father's return, to ask his consent to our union, but this fire has not only destroyed the home to which I hoped to convey my bride, but has blackened my prospects of winning you at his hand.

Mary. Do not give this a thought, Harry—you are highly respected by my father, and were it otherwise, my love is yours, and when you claim my hand, I will give it, come what may.

Har. Bless you for this assurance—certain of your love, I can defy all misfortune.

(*kisses her hand*)

Enter Squire Danvers L., carrying a gun, followed by two officers and Dolly.

Har. [R.C.] What is the meaning of this? What new trouble has come to this quiet village?

Squire D. [C.] Did you know that the body of Tim Whipall had been found near your house—and that he has been foully murdered?

Har. Murdered? Impossible!

Squire D. It is too true. When did you see him last?

Har. But a short time before I retired last night—he drank too much liquor and remained till the last.

Squire D. Look at this gun.

Har. It is mine—there is my name upon the stock. It is covered with blood—what means this.

(*all look at it*)

Enter Briery and Nibs, L. 1 E.—they speak to each other aside.

Bri. [L.] Be careful—a word, or a look, may betray you.

Nibs. [L.] How will it end!

Bri. With a rope around your neck, fool, unless you are bold. [*aside*] Did they but know that Tim is not dead, and that I have taken care of him, I should lose all my power.

Squire D. When did you last see this gun?

Har. Late last night, when I loaded it and placed it behind the kitchen door.

Squire D. [*sternly*] This gun, with the blood stain upon its stock, was found beside the body of the murdered man in the lane. You were the last person who saw it—he was found murdered. Circumstances are against you, and I must do my duty.

Mary. What do you mean?

Squire D. That at present suspicion points to Harry Fairfield as the guilty man.

Mary. [*clings to Harry*] No, no! He a murderer? Impossible.

Har. A murderer! Good heavens, who would think me guilty of such a crime?

Bri. As well might you accuse him of setting fire to his house to get the

insurance, because he only effected it a short time before it was burned. One would be as sensible as the other, yet are not both preposterous?

Nibs. And the man who would commit one crime, would not hesitate at the other. But Harry Fairfield is not that man—he is too good, too honest.

Mary. No, never by thought was he guilty of such a crime.

Squire D. [to *Harry*] It is not for me to judge, but simply to do my duty. A murder has been committed—the weapon with which the deed was done, is yours, and was in your possession a short time previous to the commission of the act—hence, suspicion points to you.

Bri. [sneeringly] Why not order the officers to search yonder ruins for proofs that he set fire to his house—he is as apt to be guilty of one crime as the other.

Squire D. Go and search—you may find a clue. [exit officer, L.—to *Brierty*] There may be something in what you have just said.

Har. Oh, Mary, you do not believe me guilty?

Mary. Believe you guilty, Harry? Sooner would I believe my own hand struck the blow that deprived poor Tim of life—but bear up Harry, heaven will not allow an innocent man to suffer for the guilty. I have the utmost faith in your innocence.

Har. Heaven bless, you dear one.

Enter Officer, L., with a coat partly burned.

Officer. This coat has just been found under the hedge near where the fire commenced. The party who gave it to me said it was the one Mr. Fairfield wore yesterday.

Har. [looking at coat] Yes, this is mine, but how it came there I do not know, as I took it off in the kitchen when I loaded the gun.

Squire D. (examining the coat) There is nothing here to criminate you, farmer—at least upon the outside. (feels in the pockets) Ah, what is this?

(draws out a tinder box and matches)

Bri. (showing signs of delight—with meaning) There is nothing there, I think Squire to add to this ridiculous farce?

Squire D. Silence, sir. Such a remark is uncalled for, after the one you suffered to escape your lips a moment ago. This tinder box, and those matches, discovered in this coat, which was found near the spot where the fire originated, added to the circumstances of the murder, all point to the fact, that Harry Fairfield, to obtain the insurance, fired the building—that he was detected by the murdered man, and to hide one crime, committed another, and it is my duty to order him into custody.

Har. (surprised) Order me to prison? Impossible! I am innocent, as heaven is my judge.

Bri. Squire Denvers, myself and Mr. Fairfield have never been on friendly terms, but I would stake my very existence on his innocence, and will at the proper time be his bail, even to the last farthing I possess.

Har. Oh, why am I tried thus. You all know me—you do not believe me guilty? No, no! you cannot (kneels before *Mary*) *Mary*, come what will, never, never believe me guilty of this crime, for I swear to you I am innocent.

Squire D. Officers, do your duty.

(they arrest him)

Bri. (aside to *Nibs*, as the officers are about to lead him away) He struck me, and I have returned the blow, with interest. The hour of my triumph is at hand, and she, proud beauty, will be mine.

(as they are moving off R., scene closes)

CURTAIN.

Three years are supposed to elapse between the second and third acts.

ACT III.

SCENE FIRST—A plain room at Widow Whipall's residence. Table, chairs, etc.—Widow Whipall, discovered sitting near table w. c.—writing paper pen and ink in table drawer.

Widow. Well, let me see—it's nigh onto three years since Jeremiah died. It was the fall after the house at Farmer Fairfield's was burned, and they thought Tim was murdered—it's strange too, that after a while Tim made his appearance, and no one can ever get a word out of him about where he was or anything about it. Yes, it's three years next Christmas. Well, I've nothing to look back upon with regret, I've lived a prosperous life, and no livin' critter can say but I have been a respectable widder woman ever since. I heard Aunt Sweet say that old Sarah Hanscom said that she should think that the Widder Whipall would be ashamed to put pink ribbons into her cap, and her poor dear husband not cold in his grave. She said that pink ribbons didn't look well anyhow for a woman of my age. Age indeed! if I was Sally Hanscom, I'd keep still about people's ages, she's nigh on to fifteen years older than I am, and she's been just twenty-nine for the last twenty years, and all the time trying to get married. She's made a dead set at every unmarried man here, and any new comer that makes his appearance has to run the gauntlet of old Sally Hanscom. It's just as much to be expected as the measles in the spring.

Dolly puts head in D. L. 2 E., sleeves rolled up.

Dol. Mrs. Whipall, what must I do with the wash? The wind is blowing the sheets and shirts clear out of their buttons and hems, and it's tore your night-gown till you can't tell which end it goes on at.

Wid. Take the clothes in, Dolly, and I'll come out and see to 'em bye and bye after my shoulder's done aching.

Dol. Yes'em. *(aside)* If I'm not mistook the old lady's in love, she's acted like it for some time. *(disappears)*

Wid. I do wish Dolly knowed enough to stay in her own regions and had sense enough to know what to do with things, and how to do it. If it hadn't been for my rheumatics now, I could have did my own work, and that night-gown wouldn't been tore. Let's see, I was speaking of getting married, or rather was going to. I feel that it's my solemn duty to provide a father for my poor orphan children, and I'm willing to sacrifice myself to do my duty. But who shall the lucky man be? I suppose I might have the pick and choice of most any of 'em, but I do like the looks of that Squire Denvers, I seed him to meetin' last Sunday, and he's rather the best looking man around here. So genteel and faskinating as the girls say, and such a nice mustache and whiskers, as a general thing I don't like whiskers, they make most men look like goats, but the Squire's is splendiferous.

Enter Dolly L. 2 E., with ragged white article.

Dol. See here, now, it's blowed the very embroidery out of yer go to meetin' bolster case!

Wid. *(impatently)* Don't disutrb me again, Dolly, I'm thinking!

Dol. Yes'em. *(aside)* It's a settled fact, the old lady's in love.

(exit L. 2 E.)

Wid. I've a great notion to advertise. Some one will answer it, and Squire Denvers is as likely to as any one, he looks as if he might be one of the romantic fellows we read about. I'll do it, I'll put the advertisement in the Weekly Banner of Freedom. *(takes pen, ink and paper from drawer)* Lawful me! I hain't got a single idea, and I don't know as I can write any more, it's been so long since I tried. Well, now for composin' the thing—Spouse I have it this way. *(writes)* "Gentlemen Attend. A widow lady of good looks, two children and some property, still young, desires to form the acquaintance of some gentleman with a view to matrimony. Address B, W. Box 210,"

Enter Sally Hunscom, R. 1 E.

Wid. (*starting*) Laws me, how you scart me!

Sally. Writing a letter, eh?—love letter, sorry I disturbed you, but I expected you had got past sich things.

Wid. I see no reason why I should not write such an epistle if I want to—but this happens to be a business letter.

Sally. Oh! I understand, excuse me, thought I'd jist step in and see if you'd heard the dreadful news, I declare it's give me such a shock that I can't keep a jint of me still.

Wid. You don't say so. What is it?

Sally. Sam White has hung himself as dead as dishwater to the bed-post.

Wid. The merciful Moses! When is he to be buried?

Sally. That's the worst of it. They cut him down before the spark of life was quite extinguished, and then they put him in a barrel and rolled him and blowed into his mouth with the bellows, till they'd resuck tionated him.

Wid. Of all things!

Sally. It's the shamefullest thing I ever heard of. It's our place to let the dead rest in peace, we've no bizness rollin of 'em into barrels and cutting holes into 'em with galpanic batteries.

Wid. That's a fact. Do sit down and spend the day, I'm going to have greens for dinner.

Sally. Thank you—I never eat greens—they don't agree with my stomach. I've got several more calls to make, and I didn't know as you and Dolly would hear about White, and I felt as if I ought to call and tell you.

Wid. Certainly. Well, I'll go down as far as the post-office with ye, I've got this letter to drop in. (*puts on bonnet*) I gennerly carry my letters myself, there's so much cheat in this world, you don't know who you can trust.

(*both exit L. 2 E.*)

SCENE THIRD—*Apartment 2d. grooves.*

Enter Mary Brierly, L.

Mary. Three years, three long years of misery and suffering to him. Oh, heaven, to what a fearful doom is he consigned, life long toil in a convict settlement, separated from all he loves. Oh, that I could gaze upon his face once more, but alas, I never can, to me he is dead, dead. (*weeps*)

Enter, Brierly, R.

Bri. Sorrowing, Mary? Oh, how it pains my heart to see you in grief, would that I might comfort you.

Mary. (*sadly*) I shall never know comfort more, William!

Bri. Nay, do not speak thus, of what use is it to repine for that which is wholly lost. If cruel destiny has robbed you of one heart, it gives you another whose love is true. Oh, Mary, give me but one word of love!

Mary. I have no love to give, I gave it once, bestowed it upon one unworthy perhaps, and gave it forever.

Bri. Oh, that such love was mine! Mary, your love is yet your own to bestow, I ask it, I implore it for myself. Give me the right to comfort and protect you, be mine, and my whole life shall prove how dear you are to me.

Mary. William, I will not deny that your conduct since my father's death, has caused me to look upon you as the best friend I have in the world, and though I respect, I cannot love you as a wife should love. My heart is Harry's in his exile, and my hand is all I can bestow.

Bri. Give me but that, and I will teach you to love me afterwards. Nay, Mary, do not let me plead in vain, say you will be my wife.

Mary. If a wife without love, if a hand without the heart will suffice you, why—why—

Bri. (*gladly*) You consent, you consent, you will be mine?

Mary. I will.

Bri. (*kisses her hand*) Thanks, thanks! You know how I have longed for this moment, now I am happy.

Mary. If the possession of a broken hearted woman can make you so.

Bri. One promise more. Do not delay my happiness, say you will be mine in one month, on Christmas day?

Mary. It matters not, I will go to the altar when you bid me.

Bri. Then on Christmas day you will be mine, and I shall be supremely happy.

Mary. And I— Oh, I shall never know happiness again. (*exit, L.*)

Bri. Ha, ha, ha! (*walks to and fro*) At length, success! Mary, I love you better than any other woman, but I love your gold better than all. Already I seem to have it within my grasp. It's glitter outshines the glare of the burning farm-house, and it's chink deadens the groans of your convict lover. It will stifle the voice of accusing conscience, and sparkle, the last shining drop in my cup of vengeance. (*turns to R. as*)

Enter Nibs, L.

Bri. You here? How dare you intrude thus upon my privacy?

Nibs. 'I dare' a great deal Mr. William Brierly.

Bri. Too much. Let me tell you, you had better be careful, or you may intrude too far.

Nibs. And if I do, what then?

Bri. We shall quarrel.

Nibs. [*coldly*] No, we shall not. We cannot afford to quarrel—at least you cannot, Mr. Brierly—not now.

Bri. What do you mean?

Nibs. That it might be a very unfortunate thing for you to quarrel with me, just when you have won the pretty Mary's promise to bestow her hand and fortune on you.

Bri. (*angrily*) Rascal, you have been listening.

Nibs. Well, and what if I have?

Bri. This is too much—I'll not endure it.

Nibs. But you must. The time has long gone by, when I was your servant—now I am your equal. I committed a crime and placed myself in your power—you committed another, and placed yourself in mine, and have repeatedly forged the name of the woman you expect to marry.

Bri. Peace, I say. Think you I would have your words reach the ears of my cousin, you contemptible eavesdropper? If you think by what you have overheard, you will wring more money from me, you are mistaken.

Nibs. Now this is unkind, ungrateful. Here you are at the present moment, positively a beggar, without enough to refund the amount of the smallest check you have forged, and yet you begrudge to pay me for silence when one word of mine would prevent your possession of a pretty wife, and an ample fortune.

Bri. Josiah Nibs, you were a cringing cur when powerless—now in your fancied strength, you are a cruel and exacting hound. Have you no mercy?

Nibs. What mercy had you on me? Would anything less than the ruin of my very hopes of salvation satisfy you? No, you have made me what I am, and you must abide the consequences. On Christmas, Mary will become your wife, and you will come into possession of thirty thousand pounds. The day after the marriage, give me one-half of this, and I will leave the country and trouble you no more.

Bri. You ask too much.

Nibs. You refuse? Then not one farthing shall you possess, nor the girl either.

Bri. (*sizing him by the throat*) Wretch, what would you do? What prevents me from strangling you?

Nibs. (*draws revolver*) This. I am not so defenseless as you imagine.

Experience has taught me to always be prepared for treachery in a hypocrite and scoundrel.

Bri. Curse you!

Nibs. Bless me rather, for saving you from committing another crime. There is no harm done, so we will again to business. (*puts pistol in its place with stock protruding*) If I were a greedy or unforgiving man, I should now demand more, but I will take the fifteen thousand, if paid at the time stated. Papers must be made out and signed by you to that effect, and in my hands, or the girl will be warned. I cannot trust you, will you consent?

Bri. I must!

Nibs. A very wise conclusion, you will gain a pretty wife, fifteen thousand pounds, and a release forever from the only man who could bring you to a felon's doom.

Bri. Enough, leave me, I have much to think of, and would be alone.

Nibs. Since we understand each other, I will not trespass further. You will not forget, fifteen thousand pounds, remember. (*exit L.*)

Bri. Maledictions on him! Oh, fool that I was, to think the worm I trod on would not turn and sting me. The hateful parasite will cling to me till every farthing is gone, and has dragged me down to the lowest depths of ruin and despair. But, no, I am not yet crushed, and I will foil him yet. One month gives me the woman I love, and the wealth I covet, and it shall also give me release from the man I fear—the viper, born of my bitter vengeance. (*exit L.*)

SCENE FOURTH.—Kitchen in fourth grooves.

Enter, Widow Whipall, L. 1 E., with an open letter in her hand.

Wid. Wal, if this ain't splendid! If it don't beat the muster, such elegant writing too. Deary me, only hear him. (*reads*) "My best, and dearest beloved widow woman, with good looks, two children and some property. I am transfigured with estatic delight to read your delightful and modest notice in the Bugle, and hasten to reply to it, with emotions of genuine beatitude. Long have I wandered alone, through this cold world, seeking for my soul's mate, and many days and nights have I wept because it was not to be discovered. Oh, my beloved B. W." (*aside*) That's me! "If you have any regard for my happiness, meet me this evening in the lane, at half past seven o'clock. Meet me, or be the means of breaking my heart forever, past all mending. Till death, your own C. D." It must be Squire Denvers,—C. D. stands for his name, Charles Denvers. Oh, ain't I a happy woman! (*dances about stage*)

Enter, Tim L. 1 E.

Tim. (*astonished*) Hi! What the dickens are you dancing for? I thought you told me that dancing was one of the devil's inventions. I'm shocked at you, mother!

Wid. (*embarrassed*) I wasn't dancing, I was only—

Tim. Shoo! I beg your pardon, but what have you got there, a letter from Aunt Susan? Let's see what she says. (*tries to take letter*) Don't be so stingy with it.

Wid. Do behave yourself, Tim. (*puts letter in pocket*) I do wish you'd try and be a little more staidier, I don't see where you got all your mischief from. There, stop that!

Tim. (*putting on one of her caps, before the glass*) Ain't it sweet, won't I captivate 'em? How becoming!

Wid. (*snatches it*) Tim Whipall, you ought to be ashamed of yourself! There, you've bent the wire all up, and smashed the ribbons.

Tim. Have I! Well I'm sorry, and now to pay for it, I'll be so kind to a poor old lady, who can't read without spectacles, as to read a little notice

I've just found in the Bugle, the richest thing I've seen for years, only hear now.

Wid. (filgiting) There, Tim, if I couldn't find anything better than that to read, I'd read the almanac. *(reads notice)*

Tim. Why, mother, that must be you, B. W. stands for Betsey Whipall.

Wid. (indignantly) Me, indeed! Tim, you ought to be gibbeted, for sijesting such an idee!

Wid. I must go up stairs now, and see to things, see if you can't behave yourself while I am gone, and let the yarn alone. It took a week to unsnarl it where you and Dolly snarled it up. *(Tim whistles)*

Tim. (looks after her) I bet I'll show you a trick about that advertise-ment that will be worse than all the yarn snarled in creation. *(exit L. 1 E.)*

SCENE FIFTH.—Woodland.

Enter, Harry L., poorly dressed, with the appearance of having traveled far.

Har. This place does not seem much changed—every thing looks as it did three years ago. I wonder if Mary still lives where she did—does she believe me innocent? What years of misery and despair have they been to me—although innocent of the crimes of which I was charged, yet I am a crushed and broken-hearted man—a fugitive, without home, friends, or the means to obtain a meal. After three years of sleepless nights, and toil-some days, I stand here once more in my native village, to feel a greater outcast, a more friendless wretch, than when chained to my fellowman, I toiled a convict in Van Dieman's land. *(voices R.)* Ah, some one comes, I must not be seen! *(retires L.)*

Enter, Widow Whipall R.

Wid. Thank the lord, I'm here at last! What an awful lonesome place, I declare, I'm a notion to be skeered. Hark, what was that! a dreadful unnatural sound, it might be an owl. Where can the Squire, be—it's time he was here this minit. Ugh, I wish he'd appointed some other place for a rendview, it's romantic here, but awful kinder like a grave yard. Dear me, what if the Squire couldn't come, what would become of me, I should be skeered to death to go home alone, and I'll spile my new gown here in the damp grass, and my feet is as cold as a rock. Hark, I thought I heard footsteps, he's coming, yes' I see him—that's his own white hat.

(smooths her hair and gives a few touches to dress)

Tim. (in the distance, singing softly) "Oh, meet me by moonlight alone."

Wid. (tragically) At last!

Enter, Tim in disguise, R.—changed voice.

Tim. Good evening, adored of my soul, delight of my eyes, good looking widow with two children, allow me to greet you. *(shakes hands)*

Wid. Oh, don't, Squire, don't squeeze my hand, don't dear—

Tim. Struggle not, my beloved, thou art in the arms of one who loves thee. Never more to go out, while life shall continue. Betsey Whipall, my beloved!—

Wid. Oh, Squire, you awful man, what if Sally Hanscom should find it out.

Tim. Sally Hanscom be blest, who cares! Wilt thou be mine, mine for better or worse, to keep and hold, to love and cherish till death do us part. Wilt thou, my Betsey?

Wid. Oh, Squire, I entreat you, spare my blushes, my face is on fire!

Tim. Compose thyself, darkness is over the face of all nature, and thy roseate blushes will not be brought to light. *(he puts arm around her)*

Wid. Don't, for massy's sake! You'll spile my new bonnet, It's all squelched up now.

Tim. Bonnets be consigned to hades. Shall a vile bonnet come between me and thee?

Wid. Wait a minit, I'll take it off.

Tim. Betsey, forbear, thou mightest take cold in thy divine head, forbear and listen to me. Wilt thou be my partner?

Wid. Oh, Squire, how you flustrate me.

Tim. Be calm!

(*kisses her*)

Wid. I shall sartingly holler, if you do that again. I declare I never seed such a man.

Tim. When shall the blissful day be, that makes thee mine.

Wid. Oh, dear me, how precipitous, I shall faint, oh—oh—I'm utterly overcome.

Tim. Only name the day!

(*kisses her*)

Wid. (*softly*) Squire, what has become of your whiskers?

Tim. (*in natural voice*) You've got me there, mother, the fact of it is, I never could make them grow.

Wid. (*starts*) What, Tim! What is it I see!

Tim. I don't see anything.

Wid. Tim Whipall, is that you?

Tim. Makes out to be.

Wid. My son, Tim Whipall!

Tim. So they say.

Wid. And you're the C. D. that answered the advertisement in the Buggle?

Tim. Yes, my beloved progenitor, I have that honor.

Wid. (*catching up stick*) I'll larn you to deceive your unsuspecting mother, you good-for-nothing disobedient boy you. (*strikes with stick*) I'll break every bone in your body, you wretched, desateful, impudent young scally-wag, you. (*chases Tim round the stage, disguise is removed—exit R.*)

Tim. (*looking after her and laughing—sings*)

She chased me through the greenwood,
And through the blooming rye,
With a bean pole in her fairy hand,
And murder in her eye.

Enter, Dolly L.

Dol. Oh, Tim, what are you doing here? This be the exact spot, Tim, where you lay down to sleep when you got so drunk, on Christmas eve, three years ago.

Tim. And a dear drunk it was, Dolly. But I never can remember anything about it—however, its been a lesson to me, never to get drunk again, and I never will.

Dol. And if it hadn't been for that promise, Tim, I never would have been Mrs. Whipall. Why, Tim, if you was to spend your evenings in the ale house as you used to do, I'd run away and leave you to yourself, and then you'd know what a jewel you'd lost, and have to look out for another.

Tim. (*smiling*) And suppose I got one, what then?

Dol. What then? Why it wouldn't be good for her, that's all, there'd be such a shine that hasn't been since poor Harry Fairfield was accused of setting fire to his home, and killing poor Tim Whipall. No, that there wouldn't.

Tim. Oh, I thought you couldn't stand the loss of me, Dolly, but there is no fear of that, I make you too good a husband for you to run away, and all I hopes is, that Mr. Brierly at the mill, may be as good to Miss Mary. Of course it ain't for to say anything agin it, but I'm sorry she's to marry him to-morrow. Folks say he's turned a'decent sort of a chap, but I don't like him for all that.

Dol. Nor I, Tim, and I don't believe but that with all his talk, and all his sorrow, he was glad when Harry was sent away over the seas, never to return any more.

Tim. He'd no right to be sent away. He never set the house on fire, and

I'll never believe he was the man as hit me on the head, though it was his gun. I've always said so, and I say it now, and I'd fight any man in the village as would contradict me. I'm always wishing I could remember that night, I believe I'd recollect something very different, but I can't, and so an innocent man suffers. You know I found myself far away when I come too, in an old house, with an old woman to take care of me, and I was sick a long time.

Har. (comes forward) God bless you, Tim Whipall!

Tim. Why, who be ye, measter, frightening honest folks in this way?

Har. A starving, broken hearted, life wearied man!

Tim. Starving, well you do look as if a meal would do you good. We be poor folks ourselves, but we won't deny you a crust and a mug of milk, if you will come to our cottage. Poor fellow, have you journeyed far?

Har. Yes, thousands of miles, to gaze once more on my native village, to look upon a face I once loved, ere I bid farewell, to a world which cruelty, oppression and falsehood, have made hateful to me.

Tim. Thy native village? Why, boy and man, I've lived here these thirty years, and never seen thy face afore. And yet—why—no, and yet there is—it can't be my old master! No, no, he be across the seas, poor fellow, transcribed for a crime he never committed.

Har. Alas! My poor honest Tim, it is indeed the wreck of the man you once called master, who now stands before you.

Dol. Harry Fairfield! Great heaven! Yes, it is he, I know him now. Oh, Tim, it is master, poor innocent master!

Tim. Farmer Fairfield, sick, and hungry, and in need! Farmer Fairfield, and I not know him! I know him now! Oh, Farmer, Farmer—dang it, I'm so glad to see you back again that—that—dang it, I've been sleeping with the window open, and have caught a cold in my head and can't speak plain. Dolly, tell master Harry how glad I be, for bless me, if I can—
(draws hand across his eyes, and grabs the hand of Harry.)

Dol. Glad to see him, Tim, why, I'm so glad that I could laugh and dance, only I can't, Tim, you see I—I—

(bursts into tears and throws her arms around Harry's neck.)

Har. I did not expect this from you, Tim, you whom I was accused of attempting to murder on this very spot.

Tim. But it was a lie, Farmer, and though I don't know the man who did it, yet I could swear it wasn't you.

Har. Heaven knows it was not.

Dol. And all the world will know it in good time—heaven will bring the truth to light at last. But you look ill, and are in want—in days gone by, you helped us, and we will help you now, won't we Tim?

Tim. Won't we lass? We will share our last crust with him if need be. Come, Farmer, home with us.

Har. I can appreciate your kindness, and thank you for it. But for the words I overheard you speak, I should not have revealed myself to you.

Dol. Why not? We do not believe what the world says of you.

Har. I will tell you. The sentence passed on me was transportation for life, and I was sent to the Convict Settlement to work in chains. But the longing to gaze, for an instant, on the face of my beloved Mary, became stronger day by day, and I resolved to make my escape.

Tim. And you have done it, Harry!

Har. Yes, I escaped, reached England and landed on my native shores, a beggar, and with the knowledge that every moment is fraught with danger of arrest and heavier punishment.

Tim. But they shan't arrest you!

Har. My good friend, I know you would shield me as far as your power goes, but of what avail is that! No, Tim, I cannot hope to baffle my enemies long. I come here to see, to speak but one word if possible with poor Mary, to hear from her own lips, that she believes me innocent. They may drag me back to my chains then, if they will, for I shall have nothing more to live for.

Tim. Yes, you have, Farmer, you have to live to prove the lie that sent you across the seas!

Har. Vain hope!

Dol. But you will come home with us, Farmer, we will hide you in our cottage!

Har. Do not urge me friends, I will go to the mill and seek an interview with Mary. Then I will give myself up to justice, for what care I for liberty or even life, if, as I heard you say, Mary, to-morrow becomes the wife of another.

Tim. Give yourself up—if you do may I be hanged! Now, look here, Farmer, time was when there was not a man as could stand afore you, as Measter Brierly at the mill knows full well, but you ain't as strong as you was, and if you don't come and let us take care of you, may I never eat hard dumplings again if Dolly and me don't carry you home, won't we Dolly?

Dol. That we will, and I'd like to see the man as will prevent us! But you will come, Farmer, and I will go and let Miss Mary know you are in the village, for if you was to go to the mill, and Measter Brierly see you, he would have you arrested directly. He be a smooth spoken fellow, but there be no good in his heart, and with all his pretence, I believe he did more to fix the fire, and poor Tim's misfortune on you, than any one else.

Tim. Did he, ah—did he? I remember the looks he gave you, and the threats he uttered when you struck him, Farmer, and I say, he is a snake in the grass, and so is his lick-spittle follower, Josiah Nibs. You must keep clear of these two, and I don't believe there's a man in the village but would stand your friend. So, come along. *(Harry hesitates)*

Dol. You won't, won't you? here, Tim, catch hold of him on one side, and I'll take the other, and here's ten finger nails for the face of the first man who says you shan't come.

Tim. And here's a couple of good fists to back 'em. Come, Farmer, come along, you must, or hang me, if I don't pick you up on my back and carry you.

Har. God bless you, my friends, and may your kindness meet its reward. *(exit L., Dolly on one side, Tim on the other)*

ACT IV.

SCENE FIRST.—*Landscape.*

Enter, Tim and Harry L.

Tim. Measter Harry, you cannot see Mary to-night, because if you were to try you might be seen by Brierly, or that darned skunk, Nibs, and either of them would have you arrested. Wait till to-morrow and I will get Dolly to see her for you.

Har. Tim, to-morrow she will be the wife of another, I must see her ere she is led to the altar. I will risk even life itself, to tell her, that while breath is left, my prayers are for her alone.

Tim. If you will go, you must I suppose, but you shan't go alone, if danger assails you, I'll be there to help you. I heard that Brierly was going away to-night, and would not be back till late, so there ain't much fear of running against him, but there is that sneak, Nibs, if he recognizes you, you'll want a friend.

Har. God bless you, Tim! I have one friend at least, in this world.

Tim. Two, Measter Harry, myself and Dolly, and we will stick up for you.

Har. Yes, I am certain of that, Tim—I wonder if she ever gives a thought to the man who loves her so dearly!

Tim. You had better let me go and break the news of your being here,

to her gently, as I am an old married man, I won't be so likely to make a mess of it, as you are. I wish she was going to marry you, to-morrow, instead of that Brierly.

Har. No more, Tim, the thought is agony to me, and yet, it is selfish of me to envy another that which I cannot myself possess. (*footsteps heard*)

Tim. Some one comes! Quick, hide, or you will be discovered!

Har. No, I will see her, or die the next instant!

Tim. You will betray yourself, quick! (*Tim pulls Harry off E. 1 E.*)

Enter, Brierly L. 2 E.

Bri. Now, Master Josiah Nibs, the sooner your business is settled with me, the better. (*looks at watch*) He comes!

Enter, Nibs L. 2 E.

Nibs. You are merry, William, but who would not be on his wedding eve? Christmas eve, too, especially after he has had so much trouble to win his bride.

Bri. You are punctual. Mr. Nibs!

Nibs. Yes, I am generally so.

Bri. Well, let us to business, and the sooner it is over the better.

Nibs. True. Well then, William, are you ready to secure or pay to me, fifteen thousand pounds?

Bri. Will not your grasping soul allow you to take less?

Nibs. Not one farthing less. Fifteen thousand pounds may appear a large sum, but then, look what you get for it! Silence, safety, and a lovely bride—Aye, life itself!

Bri. If I refuse, you will betray me?

Nibs. Assuredly, this very night!

Bri. You shall have your dues.

Nibs. Of course I shall!

Bri. Aye, you shall! But first, where are the statements you have so often told me you have written out, and would use against me, if I failed to feed your hungry soul with gold. I must have them before I pay you.

Nibs. I have them here!

(*slaps side pocket*)

Bri. Give them to me!

Nibs. (*holds out hand*) Fifteen thousand pounds. I must have the money first, or security to the amount—and then I will give you every written word of evidence I have against you. The money, or its equivalent in my possession, and I will at once start on my long journey across the seas.

Bri. (*takes roll of money from pocket and gives to Nibs*) There is the price of your silence, the half of the fortune my bride brings me! Now, for your scraps you have written of our doing, and of our crimes.

Nibs. Fear not but you shall have them—but first, I will make sure the amount is correct.

Bri. Quick then, for I have no time to waste.

Nibs. (*bending over notes*) Nor I. I am very anxious to start on my journey.

Bri. (*aside—with gun held up by barrel*) Aye, villain, the long journey you travel is not across the seas, but to the grave. (*strikes him*) Thus do I save my gold, and release myself from a merciless wretch!

Nibs. (*drops notes, and jumps at him*) Villain! would you murder me?

Bri. Would! aye, I will, you know too much for my safety! While you live, the gallows must be ever present to my thoughts. You must die, you must die!

(*they struggle—Tim looks in horrified*)

Nibs. I will not die, treacherous villain! I will denounce you yet.

Bri. You have lived too long, take this, and this! (*strikes him several times—Nibs falls—Brierty examines him.*)

Tim. (*presses hands to forehead*) Great God! now do I remember all the incidents of that terrible night! This fearful scene has now broken the spell, and brought this to my memory. These are the two men who at-

tacked me in the lane. The assassin there, is the same who struck me down and left me for dead. Yes—yes—I see it all now, and Harry Fairfield, you are saved! Murder has been committed, and justice shall yet be done you. *(disappears)*

Bri. Now, I am safe at last! The only man who could have divulged my crimes, is dead, and the terrible fear, that for years has haunted me is at rest forever. With Mary, and wealth sufficient for all my wants, and this viper *(kicks body)* removed from my path, I can defy all the world. I will throw the body into the mill stream, and all evidences of my crime will be hidden. Ha, ha, ha! this is indeed the hour of my triumph and revenge. *(drags body L.)*

CURTAIN.

ACT V.

SCENE FIRST.—Parlor.

Bri. What have I to fear, is not my enemy removed by death? Never can he or that farmer, rise to confound me, the body of one lies at the bottom of the river, while the other languishes in chains, far over the waters. I have triumphed, I will triumph at any cost, but if danger confronts me, I will be prepared to meet it. *(takes pistols from pocket and examines them)* There has been enough blood shed, already, to revenge me for that blow, struck by Harry Fairfield, on the day of the harvest home. But rather than be foiled at last, I will swim in it. Pshaw, what have I to fear! Nothing, I will be prepared.

Enter, L., Squire Denvers, Mary in bridal costume, Maids etc.

Bri. *(kisses Mary hand)* At last, dear Mary, the hope of years, the love of my youth and manhood, is about to find its reward. But why that pale cheek, can you doubt my love, Mary?

Mary. No, no, but—

Bri. But what, Mary?

Mary. I know not, William, but there is a presentiment—a something, that tells me, I shall never become your wife.

Bri. Who shall prevent you? Pshaw! Away with your presentiments! You are mine now, and forever, no one can part us. *(to Denvers)* We are ready!

Enter, Tim and Dolly L.

Tim. Hold!

Bri. What means this foolery, fellow! Why do you attempt to stop this ceremony?

Tim. Because this house should not be defiled by the foot of an assassin!

Mary. *(recoiling)* An assassin!

Tim. Yes. Squire Denvers, you are a Justice—I demand that you hear my charge against this man, before you proceed further with this ceremony.

Squire D. Get away, Tim, you have been drinking, I shall have to spoil your Christmas, by ordering you into custody.

Dol. My Tim drinking, why he ain't tasted a drop for these three years!

Bri. Stand aside, fellow, or I'll hurl you from my path!

Tim. No, you won't! House-burner, and skull-splitter that you are! Squire, neighbors, all; you know that three years ago, Harry Fairfield was transported for killing me.

All. Yes, yes!

Tim. But I recollect now, I remember all! I—

Bri. (*hastily*) Squire, as a Magistrate, I appeal to you to have this man removed. Come, Mary, let not the ravings of a drunken man distress you, a few hours in the stocks will bring him to his senses.

Tim. I am in my senses, worse luck to you! I now remember waking up from my sleep, to confront you and your villainous clerk, Nibs, whom you sent to fire the house, and leave the coat of its owner, with the tinder box in the pocket, to convict him of your crime. I was beaten and carried to an old house and left as you thought, dead, but an old woman found and took care of me until I could go home, but that was not till Harry Fairfield had been sent away.

Bri. Away, lying villain, or I'll strike you to my feet!

Mary. (*between them*) Hold! If he speaks falsely, what have you to fear? An innocent man never resorts to violence to establish that innocence!

Bri. (*smiling*) It is true! Forgive me for being annoyed at his ravings.

Tim. These are true words that I utter. Surprised in your infamy, with the farmer's gun, which Josiah Nibs had brought from the farm, you struck me on the head.

Bri. Ha, ha, ha! A pretty story, but a very weak one, when it takes three years to make it up.

Tim. Aye, villain, it never would have been remembered, but hidden behind a tree last night, I witnessed a similar scene.

Bri. (*springs forward and catches him by the throat*) Viper! I'll strangle you!

Mary. Release him! why this violence, William?

Bri. Forgive me, Mary, I scarce know what I do.

Tim. Squire Denvers, you may think me mad, but hear me and let him disprove it if he can. Here, I swear, that last night I saw him quarrel with Josiah Nibs, beat his head as he did mine, with the butt of a gun, and drag his body off and threw it in the mill stream, to prevent his divulging the crime of having attempted to murder me, and of setting fire to Harry Fairfield's house.

Bri. Heaven, can I endure this! Stand aside, Mary, not even your love shall save him!

Squire D. Hold, I command you! Where is Nibs, let him confront this fellow, and prove him a liar and slanderer!

Tim. Ah, produce him if you can!

Bri. I cannot produce him, for he sailed for India, last night, and it is well known to many that he was going!

Squire D. True, and this fellow knew it. Remove him, and I will not fail to inflict the punishment on him he deserves.

Tim. To prove the truth of every word I have said, I call upon my witness. He is here!

Enter, Nibs, supported by two men—Brierly utters a cry of terror—Mary staggers back, is caught by Dolly—every one looks surprised.

Nibs. (*points at Brierly*) Ah, villain, villain! Thank God, I am in time to prevent that poor girl becoming the wife of a murderer. Squire Denvers, I am dying, but before I pay the penalty of a wicked life, hear my confession, and arrest my murderer—I die by the hand of William Brierly, the man who tempted me to fire the house of Harry Fairfield; the man who all but murdered Tim. The man who goaded me to crime, and made me the instrument of his revengful passions. (*coughs, falls back*)

Bri. False, all false! Who will believe this tale? I guilty!—What should prompt me to such crimes?

Nibs. (*rallying*) Revenge, for the blow struck by an honest man, upon the face of a villain. Squire, with my dying breath, I swear Harry Fairfield is innocent, that I kindled the fire, and that yonder villain, to hide his attempt on Tim's life, and to destroy all evidence of his crime, has murdered me. (*falls back exhausted*)

Bri. Mary, Mary, you will not believe this wild story? (*goes to Mary*)

Mary. (recoiling) Away murderer! Oh, villain villain! Away, I say! I hate, I loathe, I despise you!

Squire D. Seize him! William Brierly, you are indeed a villain, without mercy, and as you have denied it to others, may the law deny it to you. Arrest him!

Bri. Back! (*drawing pistol*) The game has been played, and I have lost! But I'll not make a show for a gaping crowd, or stand upon a gallows. Approach not, for I am a desperate man!

Squire D. Block up every door, he cannot escape! William Brierly, I call on you to surrender!

Bri. And I refuse, and woe to him who attempts my capture. Brought as I am to bay, I can still give back scorn for scorn, hate for hate. Mary, you are saved from a blood-stained husband. But still I triumph in the knowledge that the man you preferred to me, can never possess you. Toiling in chains, a branded felon, you will never see him more. Ah, the man who ruined him to win you, still glories in the knowledge that he is dead to you forever. (*steps back and presents pistol—Harry Fairfield springs in takes pistol from him, and hurls him back.*)

Har. Scoundrel! Harry Fairfield is here to confront you!

Bri. Great Heaven! Has fate itself conspired against me!

Har. Aye, villain! Providence enabled me to escape from my chains and brought me to the spot where your last victim lay, and aided me to succor him long enough to betray your villainy. Oh, what injury did I ever do you, that you have made wretched two loving hearts?

Bri. You loved the woman I had hoped to make my own, and struck the man who never forgave a blow. I swore to be revenged and I kept my word.

Har. But how has that revenge recoiled upon yourself? Defeated, dishonored, you stand a branded felon, in the presence of those you sought to destroy.

Bri. Ah, triumph in your victory, but even yet, I will turn your triumph to defeat, your joy to sorrow, your hopes to tears, and thus I triumph even as I fall—This, to her heart!

Brierly draws pistol and levels it at Mary—Harry quickly fires at Brierly who falls back—Mary screams and clings to Dolly.

Nibs. (*raising himself*) Retribution, justice at last—I—I die—content! (*falls back dead*)

Bri. (*struggles to his elbow*) Aye, justice is mine, victory yours! My life is ebbing out fast—draw near me, all, and hear the only atonement I can make for years of villainy. I—I—am guilty—Harry Fairfield is innocent. I hated him, but my revenge has recoiled upon myself—he has been merciful and saved a blood stained wretch from the gallows—forgive me—pray for me—pray—pray— (*his head sinks slowly back—dead*)

All stand gazing at the two dead bodies for a moment.

Har. (*springing towards Mary*) Mary, Mary! My loved, my lost, restored!

Mary. Oh, Harry! Providence has restored you to me again. How gladly I press the hand from which the brand of Cain has been removed.

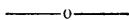
(*Christmas bells heard ringing, until curtain*)

Har. Oh, Mary, what happiness! The Christmas bells ring out in joyous peals a promise of "Peace on Earth, Good will to men."

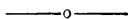
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
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